

Appendix M

Recreation Setting Characteristics Matrix Classes

Defining recreation setting characteristics (RSC) is used as a tool to help recreation managers create and maintain the appropriate recreation experiences that suit various types of land and visitors. The matrix characterizes recreation opportunities in terms of components: physical, social, and operational. The SDFO matrix contains six classes as described below: primitive, back country, middle country, front country, rural, and urban.

The BLM formerly used Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) Classes to define recreation experience potential. The ROS classes (particularly the names) had a heavier reliance on motorized travel availability. References within the RMP to ROS named classes do not necessarily directly correspond to specific Recreation Setting Characteristic (RSC) Classes since travel management decisions are not identified. However, the descriptions between the two classification systems are otherwise very similar.

Classification	Primitive (1)	Back Country (2)	Middle Country (3)	Front Country (4)	Rural (5)	Urban (6)
<i>Most Similar ROS Classification</i>	<i>Primitive</i>	<i>Semi-Primitive</i>		<i>Roaded Natural</i>	<i>Rural</i>	<i>Urban</i>
Physical Component – Qualities of the Landscape						
Remoteness (approximate distance from routes)	More than ½ mile from either mechanized or motorized routes.	Within ½ mile of mechanized routes.	Within ½ mile of four-wheel drive vehicle, ATV, and motorcycle routes.	Within ½ mile of low-clearance vehicle routes (includes unpaved County roads and private land routes).	Within ½ mile of paved/primary roads and highways.	Within ½ mile of streets and roads within municipal-ities and along highways.
Naturalness (landscape texture, form, line, color)	Undisturbed natural landscape.	Natural landscape with any modifications in harmony with surroundings and not visually obvious or evident.	Character of the natural landscape mostly retained. A few modifications contrast with the character of the landscape (e.g. fences, primitive roads).	Character of the natural landscape partially modified but does not overpower natural landscape (e.g. roads, structures, utilities).	Character of the natural landscape considerably modified (agriculture, residential, or industrial).	Urbanized development dominates landscape.
Facilities	No structures. Foot/horse and water trails only.	Developed trails made mostly of native materials. Structures are rare and isolated.	Maintained and marked trails, simple trailhead development and basic toilets.	Rustic facilities such as campsites, restrooms, trailheads, and interpretive displays.	Modern facilities (e.g. group shelters, campgrounds, boat launches, and exhibits).	Elaborate full- service facilities such as laundries, restaurants, and groceries.
Social Component – Qualities Associated with Use						
Contacts (avg. with any other group)	Fewer than 3 encounters/day at camp sites and fewer than 6	3-6 encounters/ day off travel routes (e.g. campsites) and	7-14 encounters/ day off travel routes (e.g. staging areas)	15-29 encounters/ day off travel routes (e.g.	People seem to be generally everywhere.	Busy place with other people constantly in view.

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	encounters/day on travel routes.	7-15 encounters/day on travel routes.	and 15-29 encounters/day on travel routes.	campgrounds) and 30 or more encounters/day on travel routes.		
Group Size (avg.)	Fewer than or equal to 3 people per group.	4-6 people per group.	7-12 people per group.	13-25 people per group.	26-50 people per group.	Greater than 50 people per group.
Evidence of Use	No alteration of the natural terrain. Footprints only observed. Sounds of people rare.	Areas of alteration uncommon. Little surface vegetation wear observed. Sounds of people infrequent.	Small areas of alteration. Surface vegetation showing wear with some bare soils. Sounds of people occasionally heard.	Small areas of alteration prevalent. Surface vegetation gone with compacted soils observed. Sounds of people frequently heard.	A few large areas of alteration. Surface vegetation absent with hardened soils. Sounds of people regularly heard.	Large areas of alteration prevalent. Some erosion. Constantly hear people.
Operational Component – Conditions Created by Management and Controls over Recreation Use						
Access (types of travel allowed)	Foot, horse, and non-motorized float boat travel.	Mountain bikes and perhaps other non-mechanized use, but all is non-motorized.	Four-wheel drives, all-terrain vehicles, dirt bikes, or snowmobiles in addition to non-motorized, mechanized use.	Two-wheel drive vehicles predominant, but also four wheel drives and non-motorized, mechanized use.	Ordinary highway auto and truck traffic is characteristic.	Wide variety of street vehicles and highway traffic is ever-present.
Visitor Services (and information)	No maps or brochures available on-site. Staff is rarely present to provide on-site assistance.	Basic maps, staff infrequently present (e.g. seasonally, high use periods) to provide on-site assistance.	Area brochures and maps, staff is occasionally (e.g. most weekends) present to provide on-site assistance.	Information materials describe recreation areas & activities. Staff is periodically present (e.g. weekdays & weekends).	Information described to the left, plus experience and benefit descriptions, staff is regularly present (e.g. almost daily).	Information described to the left, plus regularly scheduled on-site outdoor demonstrations and clinics.
Management Controls	No on-site posting/signing of visitor regulations, interpretive information or ethics. Few use restrictions.	Basic user regulations at key access points. Minimum use restrictions.	Some regulatory and ethics signing. Moderate use restrictions (e.g. camping, human waste).	Rules, regulations and ethics clearly posted. Use restrictions, limitations and/or closures.	Regulations strict and ethics prominent. Use may be limited by permit, reservation, etc.	Enforcement in addition to rules to reduce conflicts, hazards, and resource damage.